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Security Council

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# Identical letters dated 30 August 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I write further to our numerous letters concerning Israel's rejection of the authoritative international resolutions that require it to withdraw from all of the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967. Israel has continued to violate international law and the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. It has persisted with its aggressive settlement activities that are aimed at Judaizing the occupied Syrian Golan and altering its demographic composition. In so doing, it has flouted the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The most recent of these, General Assembly resolution 70/91, stresses the illegality of Israeli settlement construction and other activities in the occupied Syrian Golan, and once again calls upon Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and in particular to desist from the establishment of settlements.

In yet another Israeli violation of the authoritative international resolutions and international law, the Israeli occupation government has prioritized the Golan settlements in the budget for construction. It took that measure following the provocative meeting that was held in the Golan in April 2016. From 2010 to 2015, the number of settlers in the Golan grew to 21,850, whereas 24, 535 Syrian citizens live in five Arab towns in the occupied Syrian Golan. Of these, 10,485 live in the town of Majdal Shams, 6,238 in the town of Buq'ana, 3,447 in Mas'adah, 1,950 in the village of Qunyah and 2,415 in the village of Ghajar. The figures for 2016 show that 1,580 new settlers have moved into the Israeli settlements, bringing up the total number of settlers. The population has increased from 968 to 1,274 in the settlement of Bnei Yehuda; from 84 to 168 in Ovdim settlement; from 286 to 908 in Had Nes settlement; from 276 to 513 in Mevo Hama settlement; and from 491 to 729 in Avnei Eitan settlement. The Israeli government grants a number of privileges in order to encourage settlers to move to the occupied Syrian Golan, including tax exemptions and agricultural and other projects, with a view to changing the demographic situation of that territory.

The head of the municipality of Katzrin, in the occupied Syrian Golan, recently announced plans to build 4,000 new housing units in that area. He stated that the expansion was intended to mark the fortieth anniversary of the start of settlement in Katzrin. We wish to recall that in 1973, the Prime Minister of the Israeli occupation authorities, Golda Meir, decided to build an Israeli city in the

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Golan. The city would be built on the rubble of the Syrian villages of Qas·in, Shaqif and Dawrah, which had been razed to the ground. In July 1977, settlers began to move there. Katzrin was the first Israeli settlement in the occupied Syrian Golan. It contains most of the economic, cultural and business facilities, including a large sports and cultural centre, the Golan Heights Winery, the Mey Eden mineral water bottling plant, the Amid Milk plant, a science centre, the Ancient Katzrin Park, the Katzrin Museum and the offices of the Archaeological Survey of Israel, the Society for the Protection of Nature and the Golan Research Institute, Israel.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls on the United Nations and, in particular, the Security Council, to take prompt measures to bring an immediate end to Israel's actions; press Israel to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981); and compel Israel to withdraw from all of the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative